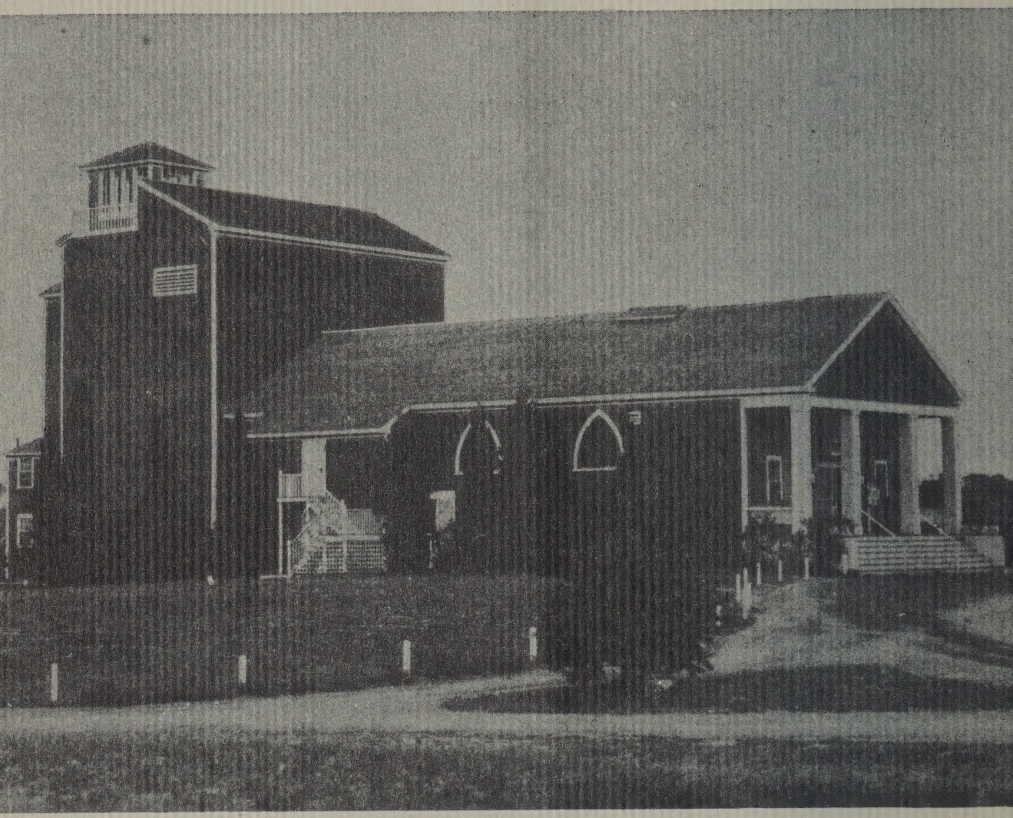
THE CAPE PLAYHOUSE
AND THE CAPE CINEMA

DENNIS, CAPE COD
MASSACHUSETTS



The Cape Playhouse, once a seventeenth century Cape Cod church — now the most successful summer theatre in America. Cleon Throckmorton, architect.

RAYMOND MOORE

"Imagine a moving picture theatre out in the middle of a stone-wall enclosed pasture, a theatre that has felt the hands of Rockwell Kent and Jo Mielziner—a gem of architecture. Picture a farm of twenty-seven acres with a rustic playhouse inviting Alice Brady, Chrystal Herne, Henry Hull, Peggy Wood and other Broadway stars; a farm that embraces two playhouses, one for the best of the legitimate theatre, the other for the best in the talking screen; actors' houses, scene shop, old-fashioned gardens and pools, trees and green grass, oil lamps along the driveway, and the warm Cape waters licking the sandy shore line.

"This is the Cape Playhouse and The Cape Cinema, a dream come true, that has attracted the attention of the theatrical and playgoing world as nothing else has since the Provincetown Players came off the Cape to bring Eugene O'Neill to fame and fortune. It is the dream of a young artist, Raymond Moore, who has transformed a wilderness off the beaten path into a thing of beauty, and at the same time has breathed into the legitimate theatre a new life and vigor.

"With an audience for the legitimate theatre and the talking picture, Raymond Moore has not embraced one to the exclusion of the other; but seeing the possibilities in both, presents both to

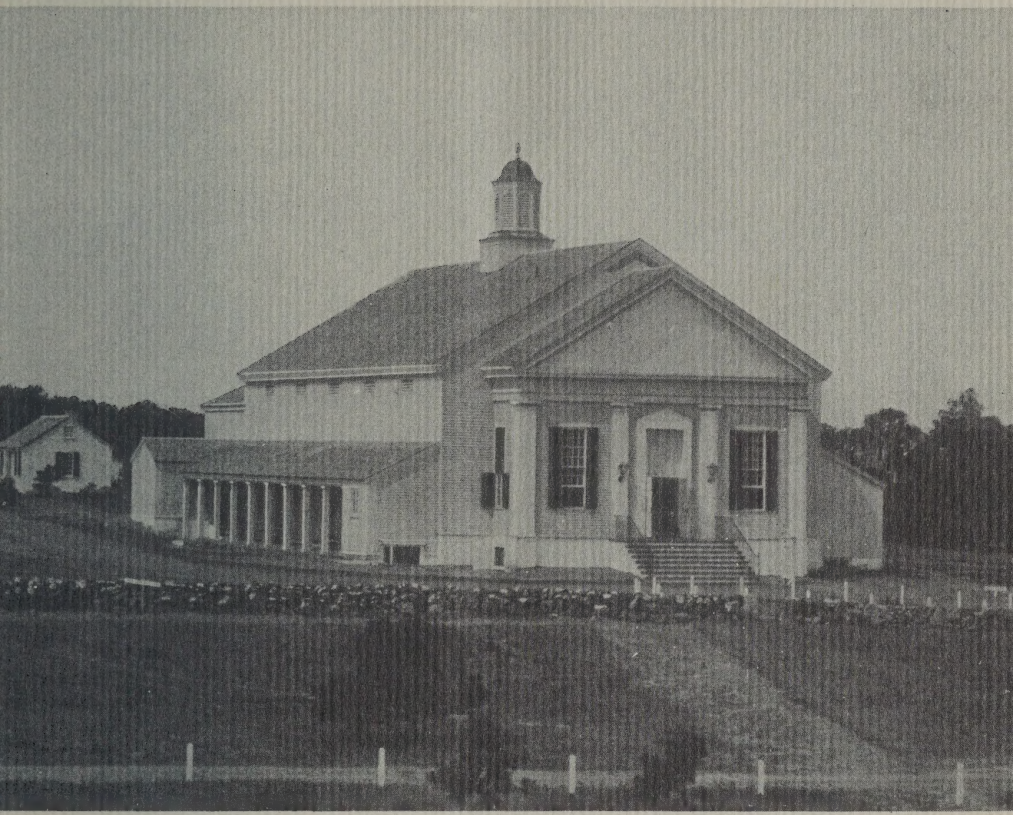
his public in the best possible form. At the same time he has proved that art can flourish in the dirt road and oil lamp belt as well as on Broadway in the 40's."

So wrote John Barry in the Boston Globe, after a visit to the Cape Playhouse and the Cape Cinema at Dennis, Mass. Many writers have since been moved to similar enthusiastic expression, while thousands of visitors from all parts of the country have made pilgrimages to this "dream come true" on picturesque Cape Cod, and marvelled at the achievement made in this "oil lamp belt" so remote from New York and Hollywood.

In five years the Cape Playhouse at Dennis has taken its place as the most successful Summer theatre in America. It has been directly responsible for the growth of half a hundred Summer theatres, scattered among resorts from Coast to Coast, and it has served as a pattern, in program and policy, for all these Summer playhouses which are stimulating and reviving interest in the spoken drama throughout the United States.

Meantime the Cape Cinema, a talking picture playhouse pronounced by leading architects and art critics "the most beautiful art motion picture playhouse in America," has attracted world-wide attention. Decorated by America's most original artist, Rockwell Kent, and by Jo Mielziner, foremost among the younger scenic artists of the theatre, the Cape Cinema combines beauty, comfort and extreme novelty. Alfred Easton Poor, of the architectural firm of Rodgers and Poor, who won the government award for the Wright Brothers memorial, designed this unique "gem of architecture."

These theatres which house the best and most intelligent stage and screen fare of our day, are situated on a twenty-seven acre farm, between Cape Cod Bay and Scargo Lake. Three acres of flower gardens are adjacent to the theatres, each of which is immediately surrounded by its own gardens and rows of cedar trees. There are also acres of landscaped woodland, a goldfish pond, and a stream which flows through beds of orchids and



The Cape Cinema, called "the most beautiful small picture theatre in America." Alfred Easton Poor, architect. Decorated by Rockwell Kent and Jo Mielziner.

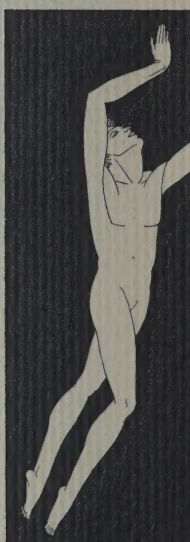
Foyer of Cape Cinema, decorated by Rockwell Kent with some of that artist's world-famous drawings.

other wild plants. In such a setting are the scene shop, where all the scenery used at the Cape Playhouse is designed and built; a comfortable inn for actors, a restaurant, an electric plant, and groups of individual cottages for the staff. Small wonder that the most exclusive Broadway stars are tempted to appear at the Cape Playhouse in summer, or that this Cape playground attracts a nation-wide audience.

The history of Mr. Moore's project reads like a romance. Born in Maryland, reared in Washington, and educated at Johns Hopkins and at Leland Stanford University, Mr. Moore migrated to Provincetown to join the little colony of art students. Afer graduation from college he had taught Botany and English and then decided upon an artist's career. The sale of a California landscape, painted while at Stanford, stimulated his ambition; he crossed the continent, and settled in Provincetown, not a stone's throw from the house where Eugene O'Neill had written his first plays.

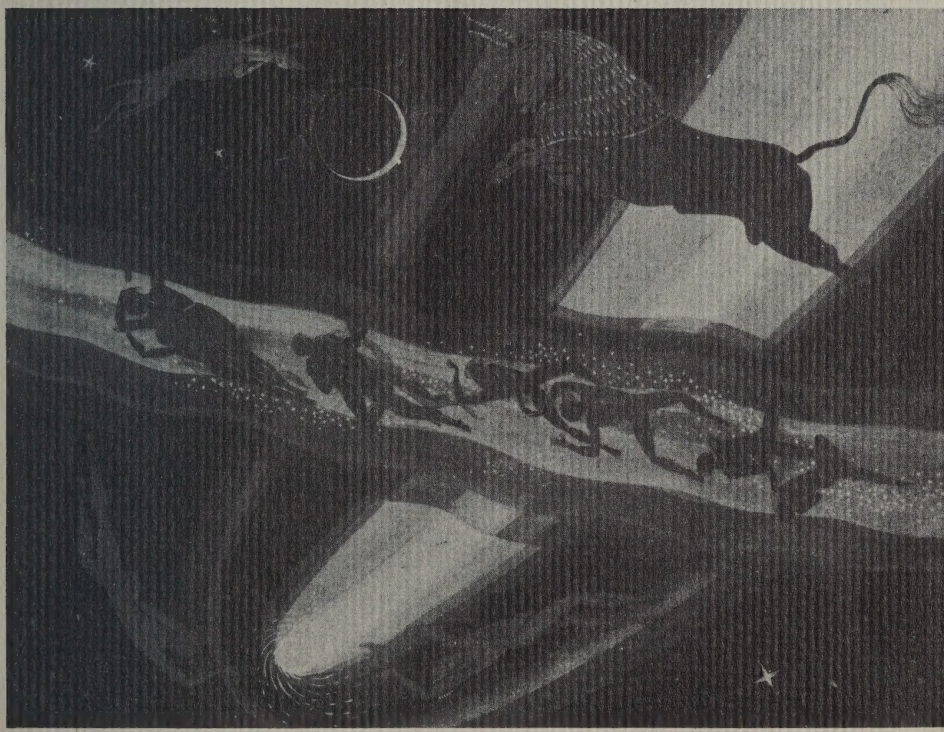
The young Provincetown group nurtured versatility in the arts. Those who painted pictures or wrote books spent their leisure hours acting and writing plays. Young Moore quickly found his place in such a group as author of several one-act plays.

The following year, 1926, he established his own professional company in Provincetown in Frank Shay's barn theatre. The productions attracted considerable attention and patronage from all over the Cape, and early that season Moore decided to move his theatre project to a more central location on Cape Cod. That autumn Dennis was selected, letters were sent to interested persons, season tickets sold, and the theatre started without a dollar of capital and two thousand dollars deficit on the Provincetown venture. An old Dennis church was bought, torn down and moved, and rebuilt in the midst of a three-acre tract of land. Moore's friend, Cleon Throckmorton, scenic artist and architect, undertook the transformation. Meantime letters were sent to different Broadway players he admired, inviting them to appear that summer at the new Cape Playhouse.



Decoration by Rockwell Kent for foyer of Cape Cinema—vivid blues and pale greys dominate the artist's symbolic, vibrating interpretation of "Horses".

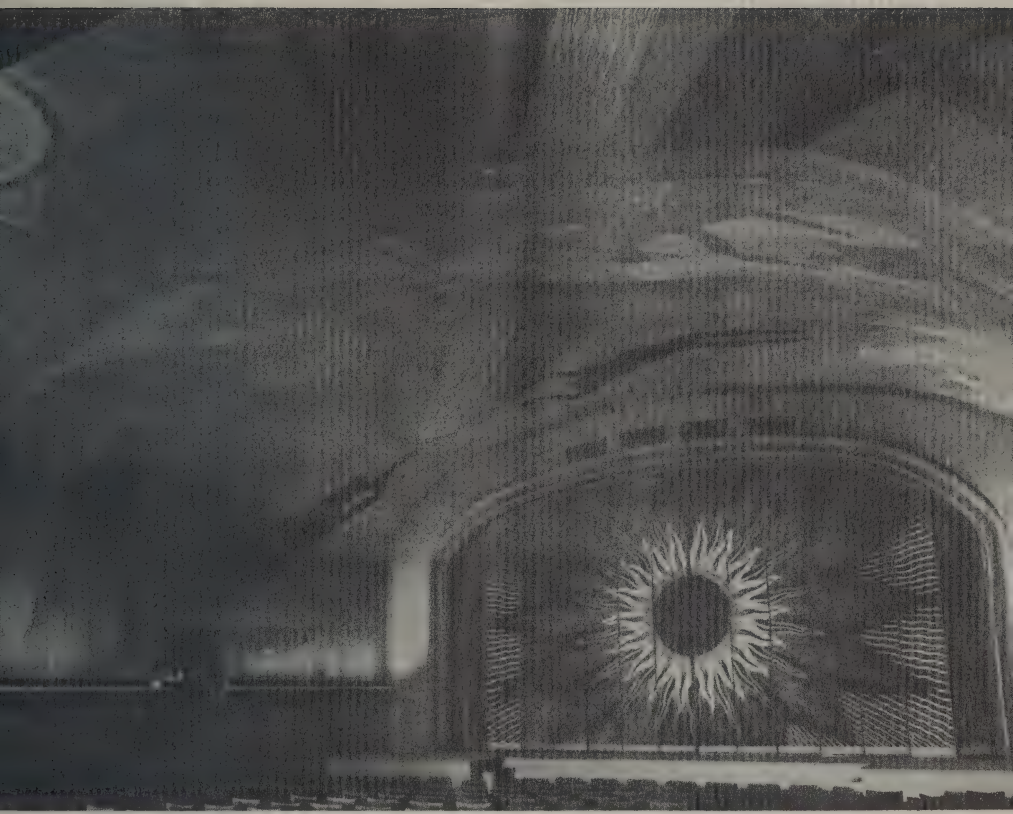
World's largest mural, measuring 6400 square feet, which vaults ceiling of Cape Cinema. Rockwell Kent and Jo Mielziner conceived this modernistic idea of the heavens.



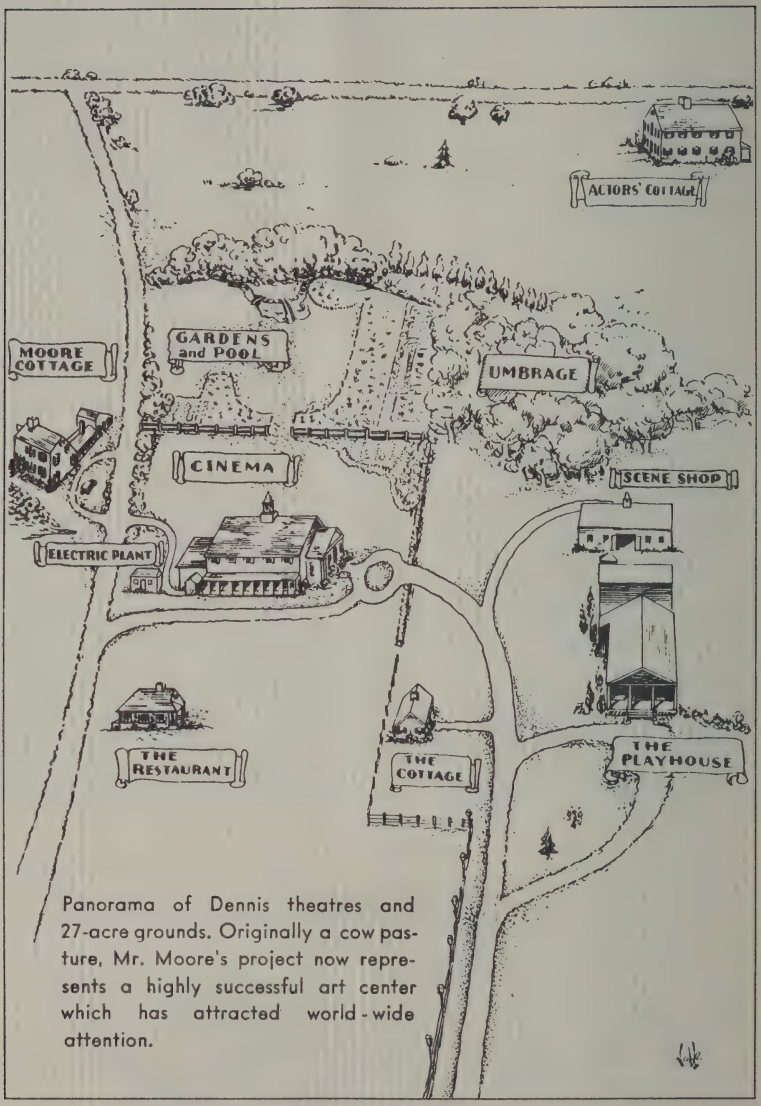
This invitation brought forth acceptances from such Broadway celebrities as Basil Rathbone, Peggy Wood, Minor Watson, Laura Hope Crews, Janet Beecher, Violet Kemble Cooper, and Leonard Mudie. Younger people who joined the group were the then unknown Robert Montgomery and Bette Davis, both now famous on the screen. Mr. Moore's idea was to give a ten-week season of worth-while plays, with visiting stars and Broadway casts. His first season was a success, the Provincetown deficit was paid off, and each succeeding season has been even more successful. Mr. Moore will also appear on Broadway this fall as a producer in Gladys Unger's comedy, "Ladies of Creation," with Chrystal Herne as its star.

A popular matinee feature of the Playhouse is Bobby Fulton and his puppets. Mr. Fulton, who ranks with Tony Sarg as one of the greatest puppet stars of the day, gives a series of Thursday afternoon performances which attract not only children but large audiences of adults.

The Cape Cinema, three years younger than the Playhouse, already has won for itself world-wide renown. Rockwell Kent's first and only mural—and many art critics say his greatest work in color —vaults the ceiling. This mural, which is the artist's own symbolic concept of the heavens, extends over 6400 square feet, and is the world's largest single canvas — more than twice the size of the famous Tintoretto masterpiece in the Doges Palace, Venice. The Kent mural reveals the sky in gorgeous colorings with a comet flashing across the heavens, and eager figures of men in pursuit. In another direction extends the Milky Way, peopled by pairs of leisured lovers. There are other symbolic figures, and the general effect is one of vast space, grandeur, vivid color, and beauty. The modernistic curtain, designed for the Cinema stage by Mr. Kent and Jo Mielziner, is another novel feature. A stylized sun, with rays, adorns the curtain, which folds back like a Japanese screen.



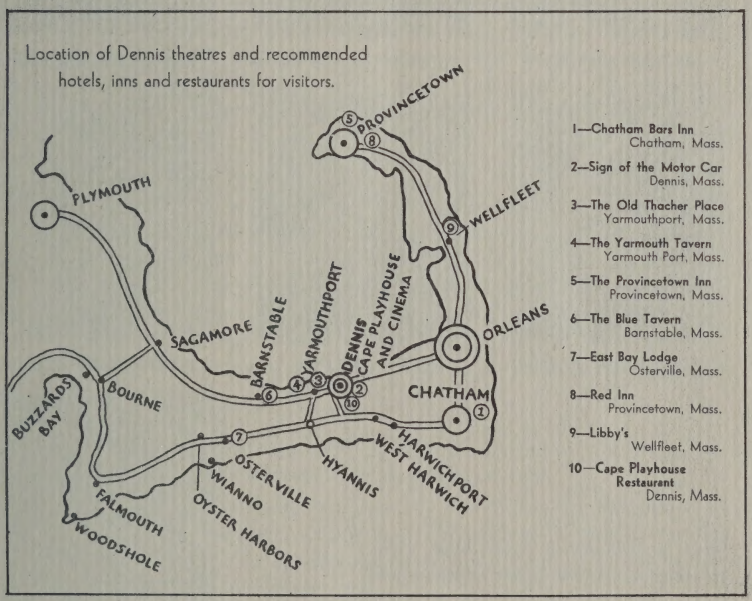
Interior of Cape Cinema, showing part of mural and modernistic sun curtain by Rockwell Kent and Jo Mielziner, which folds back like a Japanese screen.



Panorama of Dennis theatres and 27-acre grounds. Originally a cow pasture, Mr. Moore's project now represents a highly successful art center which has attracted world-wide attention.

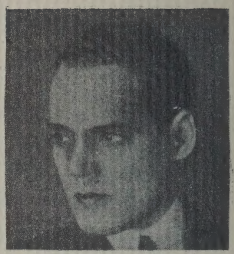
Every Cinema patron enjoys the comfort of an individual arm chair, designed by the Frankl galleries, of black lacquer, luxuriously upholstered in tangerine suede. The aisles are so spaced as to provide ample room for passing back and forth conveniently during performances. The Cinema foyer has a vivid blue sky representation with walls and rugs of grey. Striking black and white reproductions, by Rockwell Kent, of the individual figures in his mural adorn the panels.

All this, as John Barry has said, is a young artist's "dream come true." In five years Raymond Moore has in truth "transformed a wilderness off the beaten path into a thing of beauty." But this artist has still other dreams—dreams of expansion, improvement, perfection,—until his Cape Cod setting shall become a real American art center, where the best efforts of our day among workers in the different arts may be fostered in an environment of creative beauty.



ALICE BRADY

CHRYSTAL HERNE



HENRY HULL

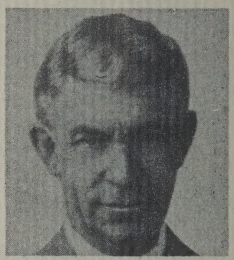
PEGGY WOOD

JANET BEECHER

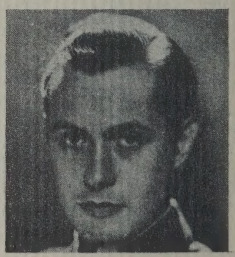
BASIL RATHBONE

LAURA HOPE CREWS

EDITH BARRETT



ARTHUR BYRON



ROBERT MONTGOMERY

Famous Broadway stars who have appeared at the Cape Playhouse.

COMMENTS OF THE PRESS

"Activities for the Summer season astir among stock and repertory companies stand out in sharp contrast to the popular opinion that interest lags in the so-called "legitimate theatre." The vogue for Summer theatres has spread rapidly and is now a highly organized project. Many men of long Broadway experience head most Summer companies, though its most successful manager is an outsider, so far as Broadway is concerned. The Cape Playhouse at Dennis, Cape Cod, probably the most successful of the Summer theatres, is owned and directed by Raymond Moore, a former professor of English and a painter of landscapes." PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER.

"When a Broadway producer, lamenting recently over the sad state of the legitimate theatre, declared that the only hope of saving the speaking stage was through the little theatre groups, he reckoned without the Summer theatres scattered throughout the country at vacation resorts. One of the most successful of these projects is the Cape Playhouse at Dennis, Cape Cod, an eighteenth century church converted into a theatre four years ago by Raymond Moore, a young Provincetown painter who now finds himself at the head of a unique theatre development. His project has so expanded that the Playhouse is now only a part of a large development which includes two theatres—the other the new Cape Cinema, the most beautiful 'art' motion picture playhouse in America." BOSTON TRAVELLER.

"The Cape Playhouse, a Summer theatre, has for the past three seasons with great success featured Broadway plays and distinguished Broadway players under the management of Raymond Moore. An entirely new departure in motion picture theatre architecture and interior decoration has now been worked out under Mr. Moore's direction in the Cape Cinema. This is the first time that artists of national reputation have been engaged to decorate an American motion picture playhouse." NEW YORK SUN.

Among the leading magazines which have printed prominent articles and illustrations of the Cape Playhouse and Cape Cinema are:

The Spur – – Time – – Theatre Arts Monthly – – Town and Country – – Literary Digest – – Screenland – – Arts and Decoration – – Motion Picture News – – Theatre Guild – – The San Franciscan – – Theatre – – Photoplay – – Picture Play – – Motion Picture.